

THE SCHOOL MISTRESS AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE.

Oliver Wendell Holmes used to enjoy his breakfasts, if his own story be true. The Autocrat would evidently have been content on occasions to extend the meal long past dishwashing time, but then there was the school mistress who had perforce to hurry to her work and the autocrat's own students were waiting for his lecture on anatomy. It is not hard to imagine the strong will of the lecturer when he could forget for the time the charm of the fresh spring morning, the pleasure of the stroll along "the long path," and the delight of the little rest upon the bench near the end of it. To forget all of this sufficiently to teach anatomy before an hour had passed—what self command! To turn from a society that made his pulses throb in an ecstasy of happiness to speak of the structure of the human heart! to demonstrate its auricles and ventricles!

But I also have my breakfast with a goodly company including a school mistress. Her way and mine also lie in the same direction in the morning as she goes to her school and I to my lectures. But we are not after types of the Autocrat and his fairest among women. We do not speak to each other at the table and each travels the path alone. The fact is that she out-talked me before my own audience—the other boarders. Before she came I used to tell my choicest stories and bow modestly to the applause. I used to discuss Chamberlain with the American gentleman and the sermon with the Scotch lady. I would turn the somewhat extraordinary tales of the commercial traveller into a laugh against himself, and altogether took charge of the conversation. This was last summer before the schools opened.

The school mistress was introduced to the company and was well received. I had been making a few remarks upon faddism in foods—there were three kinds of porridge and a patent breakfast food upon the table that morning—and was about to continue when the newcomer raised her voice. We all heard her as she intended we should. She was accustomed to being heard above the hum of a school room, so she found it comparatively easy to fill the apartment with the blare of her trumpet tones. We were not long in ignorance of the fact that she ate no vegetables, owing to a hyper-acidity in her stomach. We also learned that her diet was chiefly unbuttered brown bread, "Zweibach." This she crunched at every meal, and I soon grew adept at interjecting a word when she was occupied with her noisy mouthful.

We soon crossed swords. Her shoulder ached one morning. She had whipped a boy the day before and being out of practice had strained a muscle. I referred

proudly to three years teaching with but two strappings. Nonsense! She believed in the good old-fashioned methods, and my argument was lost. Next I ventured to sympathize with the Dental Student who had sprained his foot. He had been to a surgeon and the bandages were so applied that he could not walk on his heel. We were interrupted with the information that people who walked correctly got the ball of the foot down before the heel anyway, so that the bandages were the means of inducing a more perfect gait. This argument spun out for a week. Anatomy was flouted as showing nothing, and the common habit of alighting on the heel and springing from the ball of the foot was denounced as wrong. She had only noticed two people walking properly in a whole day of observation on a crowded street.

The arguments in which I took so much pride were brushed aside and we listened because we were not deaf, though well nigh deafened by the din. At last I begged a truce. I could fight no more and I sought to save my credit as the leader in discussion at our table. She let me go for one day, and then brought down a drill manual to the table, out of which she proposed to read a chapter as a proof of her contention. I left the table and a sudden hush fell upon the place. I left the room. She forgot the page she intended to read and no one urged her to seek for it. Since then we have not spoken, and when both are at the table there is no general conversation. We were both away one day and the boarders passed a vote of thanks to me for the sacrifice of dignity which had silenced the sounding brass. The landlady has often to delay her dishwashing now, as a few by tacit consent come late to resume the old relations.

F. K. C.

Y. M. C. A. NOTES.

During the latter part of last week Mr. A. B. Williams, one of the international secretaries, conducted a series of training conferences for the committees who have charge of next year's work. Every branch of the Association work was discussed, and the difficulties to be met were shown, and methods of overcoming them suggested. These conferences should mean much to next year's committees.

ASSAULT-AT-ARMS.

The tenth annual assault-at-arms will be held in the gymnasium next Friday, March 4th, at 8 p.m. One of the most interesting events will be the championship tug-of-war between Meds and School. Both teams are butting forth every effort to land the title for '04. The finals in the fencing tournament is attracting much attention and will add greatly to the program of the assault. Everyone should make every endeavor to attend.

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